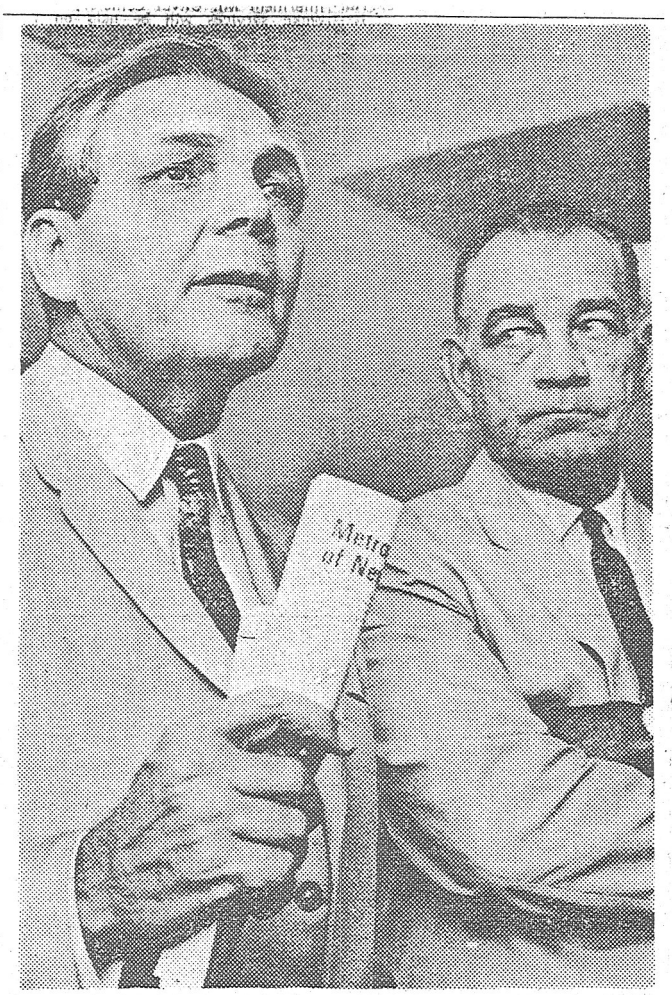

—AP WIREPHOTO.

GOV. JOHN M'KEITHEN (left) tells reporters in New Orleans Thursday that he is taking steps to form a state crime commission while E. C. Upton Jr. (right), president of the Metropolitan Crime Commission of New Orleans, Inc., listens. McKeithen made the announcement after a four-hour huddle with commission officials who allege organized crime flourishes in Louisiana.

Governor to Name State Anti-Crime Commission

T-P 9/22/67

Announces Plans After MCC Session Here

By PAUL ATKINSON

Gov. John J. McKeithen said here Thursday that he will appoint a statewide crime commission. McKeithen made the announcement after a marathon, often-loud, four-hour conference with the Metropolitan Crime Commission of New Orleans Inc.

McKeithen made no appointments to the proposed commission, which he said would have no subpena power but would be a planning and study body against crime. However, he said that MCC president E. C. Upton Jr. will be an "ex-officio member" of the commission.

The governor and the MCC group met at International House behind closed doors. They gathered at 10 a. m., broke for lunch in a private dining room, resumed and finally ended the discussion about 2:30 p. m.

Afterward, in an interview, McKeithen was asked if he would characterize the meeting as "stormy."

"Oh, no," he replied, "it was harmonious."

However, reporters heard Upton, MCC managing director Aaron M. Kohn and McKeithen raising their voices.

"We covered just about everything in the state that has to do with crime and crime prevention," the governor said. "And we are all convinced we want the same thing—to be free of corruption."

PLANS CHECK

McKeithen said there are two state commissions that bear looking into and he said he as-

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CALL EARLY

M'KEITHEN CRIME UNIT

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sured the MCC he would check the members of the commissions. Pressed for the commissions to which he referred, McKeithen said, "I'd rather not say which commissions they are."

The governor continued, "We may tip them. At the same time, we want to be careful not to sensationalize on somebody who might be innocent."

His new commission, called the Governor's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, will be appointed within the next two weeks. Tentative plans call for it to include between 11 and 15 governmental officials and community leaders.

McKeithen said he plans to seek federal funds to support the commission's work and ask the state Legislature to appropriate additional money. In the meantime, the commission's work would be financed by existing state money.

The governor restated strongly his belief that the Life Magazine article which alleged crime flourishes in Louisiana has hurt the state's image deeply. "As I go out over the United States, I've got to answer that Life article," said McKeithen.

McKeithen said he received a message from Life Magazine that representatives of it would like to see him next week and reveal the organized crime information it worked up for the article.

The governor said that he would receive the Life representatives. "I'm anxious to see the information they have," said McKeithen.

Speaking of the meeting with the MCC, McKeithen said he told the commission that he has "confidence in District Atty. Jim Garrison's integrity."

"I also told the commission that I am convinced Mr. Garrison is not connected with the Mafia," added McKeithen.

The Life article referred to Garrison's associations with alleged Mafia-connected people. Last week the MCC said it gave Life Magazine some of the information used for the story.

McKeithen denied he ever called the MCC group "traitors" to Louisiana for assisting with the article.

"What I said was that whomever gave Life the information for the article did the state of Louisiana a disservice," explained McKeithen. "And I said, if the shoe fits, wear it."

Asked why he felt Life "smeared" Louisiana, McKeithen said, "It may have something to do with Garrison's indictment of Walter Sheridan (National Broadcasting Company investigator) or it could be that they felt Louisiana was getting too much favorable publicity lately. They just wanted to knock a poor southern state down."